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Washington, D.C. - The U.S. House gave unanimous approval Tuesday night to a measure that would potentially preserve millions of dollars in federal transportation funds for Illinois. Chief sponsor was North Side Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL.)

In a curious twist, the money is in jeopardy because of an ethics reform Illinois recently adopted.

The reform was aimed at pay-to-play corruption and bid-rigging. It now prohibits any entity with more than \$50,000 in annual state business from making campaign contributions to state officials with influence over awarding those contracts.

Officials at the Federal Highway Administration, though, say current U.S. law requires them to penalize any state that imposes limits on who can bid for transportation work. Reformers in New Jersey and Connecticut have also reportedly run afoul of those same federal rules.

Reformers argue that, by reducing pay-to-play corruption, states are likely to attract more bidders for their business, rather than fewer. Reformers say that could drive down prices and save taxpayers money.

Approval for Rep. Quigley's bill came on a unanimous voice vote Tuesday evening. Among Illinoisan co-sponsors in the House: Republican Mark Kirk and Democrats Danny K. Davis, Bill Foster, Debbie Halvorson, Phil Hare, Jesse Jackson, Jr., and Dan Lipinski.

